DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 384 910 CS 214 985

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| AUTHOR | Ammer, Christine |
| TITLE | Fruitcakes & Couch Potatoes, and Other Delicious Expressions. |
| REPORT NO | ISBN-0-452-27368-4 |
| PUB DATE | 95 |
| NOTE | 255p. |
| AVAILABLE FROM | Plume Books, Penguin Books USA, Inc., 375 Hudson Street, New York, NY 10014 ($10.95). |
| PUB TYPE | Reference Materials - General (130) -- Historical Materials (060) -- Books (010) |
| EDRS PRICE | Document Not Available from EDRS. |
| DESCRIPTORS | Definitions; *English; *Etymology; Figurative Language; *Food; Language Research; *Language Usage; Social Influences |
| IDENTIFIERS | *Colloquialisms; *Historical Explanation |

ABSTRACT

This book explains the usage of more than 1,000 food-related expressions in everyday English. The 13 comprehensive chapters of the book cover the entire alphabet of food phrases from "soup to nuts" (or as in the index, from "above the salt" to "zest") as well as cooking and dining terms. The book provides many food expressions probably used by generations of 18th and 19th century schoolmasters to describe doltish students, such as "chowderhead," "muttonhead," "cabbagehead," and culminating in "puddn'head"--immortalized by Mark Twain in 1893 in his novel, "Puddn'head Wilson." The book also points out the origin of "egghead," which first surfaced in England and meant only a bald man but was soon extended to mean intellectual achievement--the newspaper columnist Joseph Alsop popularized the expression in the United States in 1952 to describe the Democratic candidate Adlai Stevenson, both bald and intellectual. The book unearths another expression dealing with school and education, recounting that in "America Eats," Nelson Algren noted that "stew" was a beverage popular with early Illinois settlers (it resembled a hot toddy, containing whiskey, sugar, spices, butter, and water), and that the last day of school was celebrated with a party at which the schoolmaster sometimes overindulged in this beverage--hence, "to be stewed." As a reference, this book would be a useful addition to any writer or student's home library. (NKA)

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